796 ploughs, stars, sun and moon, snakes, lizards, etc. They then go into their houses, and wash their hands. Taking up in his clean hands a big cake, on which are placed a little rice and butter, the Badaga puts on it three wicks steeped in castor oil, and lights them. The cake is then waved round the heads of all the children of the house taken to a field, and thrown therein with the words "Sakalathi has come." The cake-thrower returns home, and prostrates himself before a lamp placed in the inner room, and repeats a long formula, composed of the various synonyms of Siva.

(262) In the month of November, a festival called Dodda Habba (big feast) is celebrated. In the afternoon, rice is cooked in whey within the hāgōttu, and eaten on mīnige leaves. Throughout the day the villagers play at various ball games.

796 782 A festival, which is purely local, is celebrated near Konakore in honour of Mahangkāli. A buffalo is led to the side of a precipice, killed by a Kurumba with a spear, and thrown over the edge thereof. There is a legend 783 that, in olden days, a pūjāri used to put a stick in a crevice of a rock, and, on removing it, get the value of a buffalo in fanams (gold coins). But, on one occasion, he put the stick in a second time, in the hopes of gaining more money. No money, however, was forthcoming and, as a punishment for his greed, he died on the spot.

•881 (841) (349) All Badaga villages, except those of the Udayas, have a hut, called holagudi, for the exclusive use of women during their monthly periods. A few months before a girl is expected to reach puberty, she is sent to the holagudi, on a Friday, four or five days before the new moon day. This is done lest, in the ordinary course of events, the first menstruation should commence on an inauspicious day. The girl remains in the holagudi one

1; Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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881 night, and returns home on the following day clad in new cloths, leaving the old ones in the hut. When she arrives at her house, she salutes all the people who are there, and receives their blessing. On Sunday she goes to the houses of her relations, where she is given kadalai (*Cicer arietinum*) and other food. She may not enter the inner apartment of her house until she has seen the crescent moon. Badaga women observe five days menstrual pollution. If a woman discovers her condition before washing her face in the early morning, that day is included in the pollution period. Otherwise, the period must be prolonged over six days. On the third day she bathes in cold water, using the bark of *Pouzolzia* (thorē-kōlu), and on the fourth day is allowed a change of clothing after a bath. On this day she leaves the hut, and passes a portion of the night in the verandah of her house. After cooking and eating her evening meal, she bathes, and enters the outer room. Early on the following morning, the spot which she has occupied is cleaned, and she bathes in a stream. Returning home, she eats her food in the outer room, where she remains till next morning. Even children may not be touched by a menstruating woman. If, by chance, this happens, the child must be washed to remove the poilution, before it can be handled by others. This restriction is apparently not observed by any other tribe or caste.

841

[515] [824]

584 Writing concerning marriage among the Badagas, Harkness states * that "it is said to be common for one who is in want of labourers to promise his daughter in marriage to the son or other relative of a neighbour not in circumstances so flourishing as himself. And, these engagements being entered into, the intended bridegroom

[583]

* *Op. cit.*

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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585 826 It is believed that if a newly married girl has an itching sensation in the vagina while visiting her father's house, her husband will come to her the next night. Similarly, if a young husband is away from his wife, for example while grazing buffaloes, and he has an involuntary erection, this means that he will enjoy his wife within a day or two.

585 841 Sometimes a wedding is postponed a few days if the bride has a menstrual period immediately before the planned date. This is not because of the probable inconvenience at consummation, but simply because she cannot be allowed into the house until seven days after her period owing to a pollution taboo. And as we have suggested, a bride generally does not sleep with her husband immediately. She is made to sleep with other children in the family or other members of the household until her next period. Only then will the consummation occur, because the parents may want to make sure the girl was not pregnant prior to the wedding. Otherwise if they are quite certain she had a period a week or two before the wedding, and she is considered old enough, the parents may permit the consummation quickly. Even so, it is usually impossible for the bride to be 585 deflowered until the third night because she is busy with a ceremonial visit to her own father's house and village, or with those relatives who are still visiting her. On the fourth evening however it may be possible to put the couple in a separate room or another house—a widow's house is easily vacated for this purpose. The groom goes to this "bed-house" after supper and waits there while some women persuade the bride to go and join him. Usually she is shy, and even if she is eager to go she pretends to be shy. When the shyness is genuine it is because the marriage has been arranged, and the bride does not know how her husband will behave. Some girls, and even the occasional youth, are so ignorant about things that they do not know why they are being sent off to a separate room together. Such an awkward situation can soon lead to divorce, or to further sexual (586) training: an informant explained how he was asked (by his wife) (864) to have a gentle intercourse with his wife's newly married sister, since (835) she had been terrified on the night of the consummation. In general, if a newlywed husband or wife expresses fear of this event, an old (755) woman crushes the leaf of the cockspur flower and makes the person swallow it in milk or water beforehand: this cures the fear.

•881 826 Badagas believe the hymen exists only until puberty, when it is automatically ruptured by the first menses. (A few girls do not mens-

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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truate, I was told, until 18 or 19, long after they have married.) Husbands thus attach little importance to presence or absence of a hymen. A bride is nonetheless supposed to be a virgin on her first marriage, and so on the morning after her defloration her parents-in-law look for a bloodstain on the bed. If she is not in fact a virgin one of the couple will usually draw a little blood from some part of the body so as to make a stain. Whether or not the groom is responsible for her previous loss of virginity he will want a bloodstain to be found, for otherwise his parents may think he has fallen in love with a loose, unworthy girl. Badagas proverbially take a dim view of young women: "A young ox and a young girl are both inconstant: do not trust them" (Metz 1864: 94).

They have a kind of second wedding ceremony, held at about the seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy. The sexual aspect of this second ceremony is that on the following night the couple are supposed to sleep together and have intercourse. While the pregnant girl is not impure at the time of the actual ceremony, both she and her husband are considered so on the following morning. It is a ritual requirement that she carry all of their bedding to some stream, but not the usual water source, and wash it clean.

3.10. Badaga men, and less commonly women, can get a disease called *kanne no:* ("first sickness"), which is caused either by a young man's first sexual experience or by too much sexual activity in his early married years. It is a relatively rare illness, recognizable from the face and the accompanying fever. A patient is served only "cooling" foods till he recovers; he rests at home, and is also given *kodangu soppu* (made from velvety patchouli, etc.) as for any fever. The parents stop the couple from sleeping together for the time being; until fully recovered the patient will be permitted little or no coitus by his elders. This illness is said to be quite dangerous, whereas "too little" intercourse is not thought to have any bad effect on the body.

Menstrual Practices

3.11. Badaga therapists do not know why menstruation occurs, and simply attribute it to God's will. The intervals can vary, I was told, from 16 to 40 days, tending to be shorter in fat women. Among young women menses occurs every 18, 19 or 20 days, with 22 days as perhaps the maximum. With older women the period comes on

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841 the average after 25 days, and may even span two months. Girls are reported to begin at 14 or 15 years, but in some cases menarche comes at 12.

841 These are the simple physiological facts as Badagas know them,
783 yet the social implications of menstruation are anything but simple. "Menses (*olavu*) pollutes nine houses; and likewise a person who has not yet washed after a meal pollutes seven houses." As this pro-
(343) verb underlines, the event pollutes a woman and could pollute her home too; so that it has been customary for every woman to spend a few days each month in a special menstrual hut. Every village used
841 to have one (some still do), a fact that underlines the general threat
343 women posed to the purity of the Badaga house. Thurston (1909: 102-03) and "Miles" (1933: 73) record that a girl might be sent to the hut on a Friday a few days before the new moon, a few months before her first menses, lest this come on an inauspicious day. Should this occur, no further ritual precaution can be taken.

At the onset of a girl's first menses she is immediately taken to
● 881 the nearest river where, no matter what the weather, she takes a
(515) bath and then puts on a clean set of clothes given by her parents.
(783) The girl throws her old clothes away before bathing, or else picks them up afterwards with a stick and disposes of them. Nobody should touch polluted clothes, although non-Badaga scavengers may in fact take them away. Similarly the new clothes which a girl wears during her first menstrual seclusion will also be thrown away and never touched again.

881 Once these new clothes are on, she goes directly to the menstrual
343 hut if her village still has one. Although it is no longer a common institution some villages maintain one today merely for its ritual
(178) use at a girl's first menstruation, and older women are not secluded in it. Where the hut does not exist the girl is sent off to a cowshed (probably a disused one, because this is supposed to be a sacred building); or failing that a vacant house, or at least a separate room of her own house. This latter might be built for her on one end of the veranda, particularly if it is raining heavily at the time.

881 Once in her hut or room the girl is under severe restrictions. She must not touch milk (Jagor 1876: 200). She cannot go to the public water source, nor should she pass near the temple or along the street where the Great House stands (that built by the founder of the village); nor should she attend any auspicious ceremony or public festival. She should not step over the village's water channel, or the

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path between the priest's home and the temple, or go beyond the territorial boundary of her own village. She must not collect dry firewood, lest she become barren. She must not face the village priest; so that when he starts out from his home for the temple he shouts "hu:hu:" (or rings a handbell if it is a Lingayat village) as a warning to *all* menstruating women to hide themselves. The girl must cook her own food while she is in seclusion, and cannot be supplied with it already cooked from her own home. Instead, every household in the village should give the girl a small amount of rice, chili, salt, pulse, millet flour or vegetables. Such gifts are not to be returned later in equal measurs.

3.12. A girl's first seclusion is for no fixed period. She can re-enter her home only on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, but it must be either the first day after the new moon or else whichever of these three days falls most closely before the full moon. Although this is the Badaga custom, today one out of five girls would instead go to the nearest town and, in Tamilian fashion, consult an astrologer as to the most auspicious day for re-entering the house. On that day she bathes outside the house, puts on a set of totally new clothes, and cuts her nails with a small knife. Along with the other new clothes she is given the traditional headcloth, which she ties over her head before entering the home or which is replaced by the end of a *sa:ri* held over her head, if she has adopted that mode of dress (Hockings 1979a). Only after sunset, when she can see stars, does the girl cross the threshold, doing so with the right, auspicious foot first. It is reported that she used to be led up to the threshold by five elderly women (Francis 1908: 131). Once inside she goes to the doorway that joins the two main rooms, kneels down, and touches her head to the floor. By this gesture she acknowledges that the further room, the *ogamane*, is a sacred place which she will never pollute by her menses. As the girl bows down, older people in that house say a prayer. She then stands and bows her head to the hand of the oldest person in the house, and then to all other relatives present. Next, accompanied by another girl of similar age such as a sister, she goes round the village and bows in the same manner to all people older than herself. On that occasion each household must offer her something to eat as a symbol of their mutual kinship. Generally the girl is given milk, but in a large village she may only taste a drop of that milk because she could not drink so much. And although the village may be large, the bowing cannot be postponed

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till morning but must be completed at every house, no matter how late the hour. If necessary the girl must even knock on doors and waken people. Everyone should bless her, as her own mother has already done, with a formula wishing her: "May you, my darling, soon receive a husband, bring forth a son, build your own house and live happy" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 761; Francis 1908: 131). From this time onward the girl is really a full-fledged member of the village community. There is a rule, no longer followed, that she should now bow down to any visitor from another hamlet, whether a man or woman. More importantly she is now recognized as being ready for marriage. Traditionally her forehead would be tattooed a few days later, leaving a visible sign of her marriageability (Natesa Sastri 1892: 760; Francis 1908: 131).

3.13. The menstrual hut (*holagudi*—"pollution place") was an important institution in the lives of adult women. They were customarily secluded there for a period of five to seven days (Thurston 1909: 103; "Miles" 1933: 74). If a woman discovered her condition before washing in the morning, that day would be considered the *third* of seven days of pollution. To be more exact: in calculating those days, the second day of observable menstruation is counted as the third; but if the onset is noticed before sunrise then that same day is already counted as the nominal third day. This habit of mind is expressed in the proverb: "If dying today, it will be three days by tomorrow." Thus the entire menstrual period would cover five or six days, and not seven as informants may assert. It was the custom that on the real third day of her five secluded days a woman would bathe in cold water using bark of pellitory as soap. On the fourth day she was to repeat this bath, but could then put on a change of clothing, leave the hut, and spend part of the night on her own veranda. After cooking and eating her evening meal there she would bathe again and could then enter the outer, less sacred room of the house. Early next morning the spot where she slept was cleaned, and the woman bathed in the stream. Then she would return home, eat her meals in the outer room, and remain there until next morning, the sixth actual day, when the pollution period would terminate. During the entire period no one may touch a menstruating woman. Should a child nonetheless do so he must be washed to remove the pollution before he comes into contact with anyone else.

It was customary for women to use a kind of sanitary pad in the menstrual hut, made out of shredded bark and leaves ("Miles"

4; Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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half-a-dozen of the common patterns (1876: 195). These designs, made up of dots, dashes, crescents and circles, were also to be seen on the shoulders of some women, and the forearm and back of the hand were commonly tattooed as well. Although it was obligatory it was never an occasion for ceremony. The technique calls for an older woman, Badaga or otherwise, to etch the pattern on the skin with a thorn from one of two plants, the common Nilgiri barberry or the Bengal currant. Pins and needles are used now. The pigment used is finely powdered charcoal from the bottom of a pot, or else lamp black, mixed with rice gruel (Thurston 1909: 82). Afterwards an oil is put on to the wounds. Rhiem (1900: 504) adds that a silver finger-ring is plunged into a corrosive black liquid and then pressed against tattoo wounds. Shoulder, wrist and hand tattoos may be added later, even after marriage, while a woman is in the menstrual hut. Men are never present for a tattooing.

(*i*) *Milking Initiation*. Nothing ceremonial happens to a boy between his naming and head-shaving in infancy, and the initiation into adult work between the ages of seven and nine. This involves his ceremonial milking of a buffalo (Natesa Sastri 1892: 757-58; Francis 1908: 131; Thurston 1909: 87-88; "Miles" 1933: 73).

(*j*) *Lingayat Initiation*. Boys of the several Lingayat clans, including the Woḍeya phratry, undergo a ceremony of investiture of the *linga* at about their 13th year. A *puːja* is performed and the boys learn a prayer (Natesa Sastri 1892: 758-60; Thurston 1909: 90-93). Today the ceremony, which is always to be done in an odd-numbered year of a boy's life, occurs even as early as his fifth year.

(*k*) *Puberty Rites*. Menarche is marked by complicated observations, as explained above (3.11); but for a boy's puberty there is no observance whatsoever.

Childhood Maladies

5.23. Whatever may seem to be wrong with an infant it is given no medicines until its fifth month. If necessary before then a medicine may be given to its mother, in the expectation that the child will derive a benefit from it through her milk. This is the case for example if a child is affected by a "bad wind."

In earlier days a thread with 108 knots in it

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Other Specialists

759 10.8. Midwives and exorcists are specialists, of course, but they
791 differ in status. The midwife deals in the pollution of blood, and
462 is always a female; the exorcist deals in the danger that spirits
[554] bring, and is invariably a male. It is thus in accordance with Hindu —and Badaga—thinking that the exorcist ranks higher and the midwife lower in esteem than the more general therapist, whether male or female: one handles supernatural power, the other female pollution.

759 Aside from these categories, however, there are other specialists who are known for their ability to handle particular types of malady. In the foregoing chapters we have encountered three instances of such people. One was a woman, the grandmother of my informant M. N. Thesingh. At the time of her death in 1941 she
759 had treated "nearly a thousand cases" of infertility in women, and
757 found only half-a-dozen of these to be really barren women. For the rest, she prepared a medicine out of three or four different plants.
842 What they were was a secret she took with her to the grave, for she thought that if she taught the medicine to anyone else it would not work well for either of them. She even told her grandson, "You must discover the technique for yourself." He took this to mean that he should spy on her, and once did so. She used to get up at about five in the morning, wash, and then go out to the fields or the forest. On reaching the spot where the necessary plants grew, she looked around till she saw what she wanted; then, with the plant in front of her, she stood facing the east, her palms touching each other as she prayed. Then she sat cross-legged on the ground at that spot and removed a silver ring from the middle finger of the right hand. This she placed on the plant that was in front of her, prayed again, then replaced the ring and picked the plant. She explained later that the ring was an offering to God ; but her grandson failed to discover the identity of the plants.

759 One case that is remembered by him illustrates the assurance
•881 with which this woman treated her patients. A 19-year old girl was
554 was brought from a very distant village, her problem being that she had never menstruated (or had she, but was afraid to admit it for fear of being married?). She arrived on Wednesday, but the
[777] therapist (like her daughter-in-law Sithamma) refused to begin new treatment unless on a Tuesday, Friday or Sunday, which are auspicious days; so the girl had to wait.

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cious days; so the girl had to wait. She started working in a field to while away the time. After several hours the therapist called her over and said the girl need not have come as she would be menstruating in a day or two. And at about five on Friday morning she went out of the house and began her first menses. The woman who had come with her was overjoyed, and fell at the therapist's feet in gratitude. The girl bathed and was given clean clothes, then returned to her village. Such tales enhance a reputation greatly; we do not know whether any medicine was involved in getting the desired result. Asked how she could foretell such things, the therapist said that when she went to gather the herbs at dawn and prayed to God, He gave her the information needed. She also got accurate information from her dreams: thus on one occasion she dreamt that part of a wall had fallen in a heavy rainstorm during the night; another time she dreamt there were pigs in the potato field; and yet again she dreamt a particular buffalo was giving birth to a calf. On each of these occasions she woke up, told her grandson, and sent him immediately to check; and each dream was precisely true. In each she could indeed have been stimulated by some actual noise; but the effect was that relatives and neighbours believed in the infallibility of her knowledge, and she was quite famous in the Nilgiris for that.

Another specialist whose work we have described in detail (7.10) is the man who cures Big Wind. As he himself explained, there are three Badagas who know the cure, but he is the only one still able to practise. One of the other men is too old, and the third drank liquor, ate meat and generally led such an impure life that he was not successful with the treatment. The practising therapist in contrast is a vegetarian, and he works over half the Nilgiri Plateau. He never turns away a patient, because it would be sinful to do so, just as he feels it would be sinful to teach the treatment to someone who was not willing to take on every case. This therapist, who was about 80 in 1963, never charges his patients, for he believes the medicine will lose its efficacy if he puts a monetary value on it and on his own labour; but he is willing to accept gifts.

A third specialist whom we have mentioned lives in the village of Kallaṭṭi, and is famed for his treatment of the *ka:male* diseases (7.9). His family have had this speciality for the past three or four generations. He uses the dried bark of a tree that grows on the lower slopes of the Nilgiris, but there are different

B: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50

the kinship system in the Badaga case as having developed as a means of assigning and transferring ownership of and rights in property, especially cattle and houses, but to a lesser extent land too. We must remember that in the early days Badagas practised swidden agriculture (although strangely that is not mentioned in the early ballads), and the Nilgiri population density was so low that land really had no market value there and was very easy to come by.

Now, keeping a herd of buffaloes requires adequate grazing and certain other conditions. One is the presence of a number of active men, typically brothers, who will keep the herd together while grazing and fend off tigers when possible. Women could not do this work: the epic poem *Ba:la Sevana* ridicules the mother of the hero for trying to drive the family's herd out to graze with a stick in her hand. Both swidden and ordinary plough agriculture also called for the combined efforts of several men (as well as a number of women), and so here too Badagas found a good reason for cultivating their fields as a joint family. Many still do so today. The point to be noted is that both the buffalo-herding and ox-ploughing and swidden cultivation were economic conditions that favoured patrilocality, the joint family, and brother/sister exchange at marriage—this latter a preference which maintained a balance of manpower between two intermarrying families or settlements. If a youth married his FZD and her brother in turn married *his* MBD, brother/sister exchange would result, the ideal of cross-cousin marriage would be honoured, the two families involved would have asserted their equality, and close relations would ensue between them. Where brother/sister exchange has occurred, divorce becomes rather more difficult because it places great strains on the other couple, those who are not getting divorced.

The girls in this system invariably go off to another village in marriage at or shortly after menarche, where they will be needed to *(a)* do house-work and look after small children; *(b)* do some sowing, weeding and reaping in the fields; and *(c)* raise a new generation of farmers and buffalo herdsmen. In this married situation the birth of a son means that a woman has largely fulfilled all three of her obligations to the family she has joined—for on marriage a Badaga girl relinquishes membership in her natal family, lineage, and village, and joins those of her husband. Her membership in them is made especially manifest when her husband dies and a son continues to support her in her husband's village; and when she too dies it is her husband's village and its headman who are responsible for conducting her funeral, with the collaboration of her husband's family.

The economic decision-making rests with the adult men: when to sow, what to plant in each kind of soil, when and where to move the cattle in search of new grazing, when to harvest, and, in former times, when to move the swidden. These decisions call for accurate topographical knowledge, and it is thus both appropriate and necessary that the detailed local knowledge which boys acquire in work and play should be put to good use when they

795 If more than one have to receive the *Linga* on the same day
[793] each of them has to undergo this ceremony. After the ceremony is
[796] over the priest returns to his village with the rice, &c., and fees. Every house in which a boy has received the *Linga* has to give a grand feast that day. Even the poorest Badaga must feed five other Badagas at least.

Thus closes the Linga-wearing ceremony of the Badaga boy, after which he passes through no additional ceremony. He spends his time now in milking the buffaloes, now in the fields, and is thus always preparing himself to become in the future the responsible head of a Badaga family.

121 Before we speak of the ceremonies connected with the courtship and marriage of a Badaga youth and of those which are due to him at the time of and after his death, which we shall dwell upon at their proper place, we shall turn our attention to a Badaga female-child and trace her from her birth to her marriage. As soon as a female-
584 child is born, some of her relations who are in a position to contract a marriage relationship bespeak the baby, and arrange for her to be married at the proper age to such and such a boy. In consideration of this they give Rs. 10 as a fee. This is everything to the girl and her price cannot afterwards be enhanced even though when she grows up she may be worth more—even as much as Rs. 200 which is the highest rate prevailing among them. Even when a girl is thus bespoken, all the forms connected with the courtship and marriage which I am about to describe are observed except the one of handing over the price of the girl, which in such a case has already been paid. This custom of contracting relationship is rare but it does occur in
[684] ten out of a hundred cases. Violations of this kind of marriage are considered very ungentlemanly but they are not infrequent. The fine for such violations is after all very light, being merely the return of the Rs. 10 formerly paid for the girl when the infant was bespoken.

561 Let us now go back to the baby and suppose her not to be thus
852 bespoken. She has no rites or any observances to undergo till she becomes of a marriageable age. She then leaves her parents' house and goes to a building called the *Hola-Gudi*. This *Hola-*
•881 *Gudi* is a public place reserved exclusively for women and grown up
(591) girls, and is a building that every Badaga village contains. She is presented with a new cloth by her parents and remains in the *Hola-Gudi* till the next full-moon day. All the families in the village bring to her one measure of wheat or *Korali* flour from each

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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342 roof of it is well planked, and over it is another small room called *Mêlâḍu*—upper storey—which serves as a store-house. Next to the *Edirmanè*, on the right, is the *Hâgôṭu*—the milk house—a place of worship to the Baḍagas, into which the women are not allowed to enter; and adjoining it is the kitchen, called *Hole* by the Baḍagas; the last of all the rooms is the *Pillè*—bath-room. Thus the front room, a store-room over it, the milk-house, a kitchen and a bath-room complete the arrangement of a Baḍaga house.

352 The Baḍaga invests some money in that most necessary piece of furniture in a cold climate,—a family cot to sleep upon. It is always a broad thick plank of some fine wood—teak, jack or ebony, and is the only substantial movable property of a Baḍaga.

121 We shall now describe the Baḍaga ceremonies and rites, and the best way to exhaust them is to trace an individual from the time of his birth to his death. Of course some difference must exist in the case of males and females, and these we shall note as we proceed.

852 In the case of a boy little or almost nothing is done to the child
[551] as a ceremony till his ninth year. On the third month after his birth he is given a name, and his head is shaved. But nothing further occurs till the baby has grown into a boy of nine years. Then
881 the initiation of the boy into the duties of a Baḍaga—milking the buffaloes—is performed. In describing the Baḍaga house I have already made mention of the *Hâgôṭu*—the milk house—a place of
[562] worship in which the milk is stored up. Females are debarred
[858] from entrance into it, and so are the male children till they undergo this ceremony which we are about to describe.

Early in the morning of the day appointed for this ceremony the boy is bathed and appears in his holiday dress. A she-buffalo with her calf stands before his house waiting to be milked. The parents or other elder relations of the boy and those who have been invited to be present on the occasion, or whose duty it is to be present, then conduct the boy to the spot. The father or some one of the agnatic kindred gives into the hands of the boy a bamboo vessel called *Hoṇe* which is already very nearly full of fresh-drawn milk. The boy receives the vessel with both his hands and is conducted to the buffalo. The elder relations show him the process, and the boy sitting down milks a small quantity into the *Hoṇe*. This is his first initiation into the duty of milking; and it is that he may not commit mistakes on the very first day of his milking that the *Hoṇe*
[747] is previously filled almost to the brim. It is extremely curious to see that this is observed as a regular ceremony, and it indicates

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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[88] [114] that originally this milking of the buffaloes must have been the main vocation of the Badaga. The boy then takes the vessel thus filled with milk into his house and pours some of the sacred fluid into all his household eating vessels—a sign that from that day he has taken upon himself the responsibility of supplying the family with milk. He also throws some milk on the faces of his parents and relatives. They receive it very kindly and bless him, each in his or her turn, and request him to continue thus to milk the buffaloes and bring plenty and prosperity to the house. After this the boy enters the milk-house—the *Hâgôṭu*—and places milk in his *Hoṣe* there. From this moment and all through his life he may enter into that room, and this is therefore considered a very important ceremony.

[795] [561] The next important rite among the Liṅgâyat sect of the Badagas is the wearing of the *Liṅga*, or the initiation of the boy into his religion, which takes place about the thirteenth birthday of the boy. The priest conducts this ceremony and the elder relations of the family have only to arrange for the performance of it. [793] The priests belong to the Uḍaya sect of the Badagas. They live in their own villages, and are specially sent for and come up to the boy's village for the occasion. The ceremony is done generally to several Badaga boys of [785] almost the same age on the same day. On the day appointed all the people in the Badaga village where this ceremony is to take place observe a strict fast. The cows and buffaloes are all milked very early in the morning and not a drop of the milk thus collected is given out or taken by even the tenderest children of the village who may require it very badly. The Uḍaya priest who has been invited arrives near the village between 10 and 12 A.M. on the day appointed. He never goes into the village, but stops near some rivulet adjacent to it. The relations of the boy or boys approach him with a new basket containing five measures of uncooked rice and pulse, ghee, &c., and a quarter of a rupee,—one fanam, as it is generally designated. The priest sits near the water-course and lights up a fire on the bank. Perfumes are thrown profusely [783] into it and this is almost the only ceremony before the fire. The boys whose turn it is to receive the *Liṅga* that day are all directed [824] to bathe in the river. A plantain leaf cut into one foot square is placed in front of the fire towards the east of it. The *Liṅgas*, kept in readiness by the parents of the boys, are now received by the priest and placed on the leaves. The boys are asked to wash them—each one the *Liṅga* meant for his wearing—in water and milk. Then comes the time for the expenditure of all the collected milk of

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house every day, and all the girls of the village assemble there, cook and eat together. On the morning of the next full-moon day she bathes, receives again a new cloth from her parents and sits outside the house till the hour when the moon rises in the evening. When she sees the moon appear above the horizon she enters her house. Five old females accompany her and conduct her into the house, where the mother standing at the threshold thus welcomes her daughter back, saying,—

Gaṇḍettu, makkettu, mane kaṭṭi sukhavâgi badu-kammâ baduku, meaning:—May you, my darling, soon receive a husband, bring forth a son, build your own house and live happy.

The mother now gives her a dish containing rice, milk and curd. This is done in the outer house, for the girl is all this time on the threshold and has not yet entered the inner house. After a little of what has been given her by her mother she has to proceed to every house in the village, the eldest female member of which pronounces upon her the same blessing and gives her the same dish to eat. She receives these and pretends to eat a mouthful in every house and then returns home. The mother now stands waiting anxiously her daughter's return. She takes her girl in, and now the pots and other utensils of the family may be touched. This closes this ceremony, the only one that a woman has to undergo before her marriage, and a few days after it is performed the mark which proclaims to the whole Badaga world that the girl is of a marriageable age is put on her forehead. It consists of four different dots, thus:—

It is called technically among them *Hasil-hâkulvadu*, meaning tatooing the head, but I have not been able to find any one who could explain to me the meaning of these dots. I surmise that they are the end marks of a trident, the favourite weapon of Śiva. As soon as this mark is put upon a girl's forehead it is a caste proclamation, as it were, that any one may claim her hand in marriage, and that the young Badaga in search of a wife may pay a visit to her father's house.

In the Udaya class there is nothing of the nature of courtship, but the father settles the bride or bridegroom for his child. The girl to be married is brought to the village in which the boy chosen